



PRODUÇÃO CIENTÍFICA DE GRUPOS DE PESQUISA DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO NO BRASIL

## Envelhecimento populacional e métodos projetivos de avaliação psicológica: contribuições e desafios

*Population aging and projective methods of psychological assessment: contributions and challenges*

*Envejecimiento poblacional y métodos proyectivos de evaluación psicológica: contribuciones y desafíos*

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**Resumo:** Diante dos desafios impostos pelo crescente envelhecimento populacional, este artigo delinea as contribuições do Grupo de Trabalho (GT) de Métodos Projetivos nos contextos de Avaliação Psicológica da Associação Nacional de Pesquisa e Pós-graduação em Psicologia (ANPEPP), desde sua criação em 2008. Descrevemos estudos empíricos realizados com pessoas idosas a partir de métodos projetivos, especialmente dedicados aos componentes psicodinâmicos da personalidade. Foram identificados, descritos e analisados dez estudos publicados em periódicos científicos, ilustrando a necessidade de maior investimento em pesquisa nesta complexa área, bem como os desafios a serem enfrentados pelos psicólogos neste campo. Observamos a riqueza das informações advindas dos métodos projetivos em processos de avaliação psicológica com adultos idosos, bem como a relevância de estimular a formação de recursos humanos nessa área, de modo a oferecer embasamento teórico e prático para ações profissionais, mediante a crescente longevidade humana presente na multiplicidade de ambientes que compõem o país.

**Palavras-chave:** pessoas idosas; saúde mental; avaliação psicológica.

**Abstract:** Considering the challenges of the growing aging population, this study shows the contributions of the Working Group on Projective Methods of Psychological Assessment of the National Association of Research and Graduate Studies in Psychology (ANPEPP), since its inception in 2008. We described empirical studies with elderly individuals using projective methods, especially focused on the psychodynamic components of personality. We identified ten studies published in scientific journals, which were described and analyzed, highlighting the need for further research investment in this complex area, as well as the challenges faced



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by psychologists working in this field. We also observed the richness of the information derived from projective methods in psychological assessment processes with older adults and encourage the development of human resources in this area. Such is important for providing theoretical and practical foundations for professional actions, given the increasing human longevity present in the diverse environments that make up the country.

**Keywords:** aged persons; mental health; psychological assessment.

**Resúmen:** Ante los desafíos impuestos por el creciente envejecimiento poblacional, este trabajo retrata las contribuciones del Grupo de Trabajo (GT) "Métodos Proyectivos de Evaluación Psicológica" de la Asociación Nacional de Investigación y Posgrado en Psicología (ANPEPP), desde su creación en 2008. Describimos estudios empíricos realizados con personas viejas utilizando métodos proyectivos, especialmente dedicados a los componentes psicodinámicos de la personalidad. Se identificaron, describieron y analizaron 10 trabajos publicados en revistas científicas, ilustrando la necesidad de mayor investigación en esta compleja área, así como desafíos que enfrentan los psicólogos en este campo. Observamos la riqueza de la información derivada de los métodos proyectivos en procesos de evaluación psicológica con personas viejas y la relevancia de estimular la formación de recursos humanos en esta área, con el fin de ofrecer una base teórica y práctica para acciones profesionales, dada la creciente longevidad humana y la multiplicidad de ambientes que conforman el país.

**Palabras clave:** adultos mayores; salud mental; evaluación psicológica.

## Introduction

Population aging, a phenomenon observed both in Brazil and worldwide, brings new demands to the field of Psychological Assessment. Longer life expectancy and the increasing number of elderly people require a more complex and sensitive psychological approach to the changes that occur throughout the developmental process. Psychological assessment processes that adjust to the peculiarities of aging are essential to support the development of public policies and mental health programs focused on the elderly (Leandro-França & Murta, 2014; Schnaider & Nakano, 2021).

Within this context, assessment resources should be able to capture the specificities of this stage of life. The use of psychologically validated instruments within multimethod approaches ensures that the psychological assessment of older adults is accurate and provides relevant information to support interventions aimed at

promoting healthy and active aging (Ebrahimi et al., 2022).

Considering the plurality of informational sources, the present article highlights projective methods and their important role in the psychological assessment of the elderly population. These instruments allow for accessing deep emotional content, concerns, and conflicts that are not easily, verbally expressed through other, more direct tests (being them self-report-based or displaying only predetermined response options). In a context where social isolation, loss of social roles, and dealing with physical limitations are frequent issues, the use of projective methods can help identify (and help express) anxieties, fears, and other feelings, thus facilitating both planning and delivery of more effective and personalized therapeutic interventions.

Based on a review of scientific literature cataloged at PsycINFO (covering the period from 1954 to 2016), Piotrowski (2022) identified 35 articles focused on projective methods with older adults. She selected and analyzed 23 empirical studies of these articles, concluding that "projective methods have the ability to reveal latent psychodynamics, identify cognitive deficits, and differentiate select diagnostic groups. These attributes of projective measures are a key feature in the assessment of the elderly, where issues such as depression, declining health, and deficits in verbal expression are critical clinical challenges" (p. 75).

In another article, Piotrowski (2019) presented empirical evidence regarding the neglect of scientific investigation on the topic of personality in old age. She points out that the central focus of research with this population is on neuropsychological assessment, particularly related to potential cognitive impairments associated with aging. Within this status being identified in an international context, the present article focuses on the contributions of the Projective Methods Working Group (GT) of the National Association for Research and Postgraduate Studies in Psychology (ANPEPP) to the studies carried out in Brazil. ANPEPP is a non-profit organization

founded in 1983, which brings together Brazilian postgraduate programs in psychology with the aim of promoting research, training professionals and encouraging debate on relevant issues in the field.

To contextualize this topic, it is important to remember about the growing aging of populations worldwide, according to the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO, 2023), including in Brazil. The most recent data from the country's 2022 Demographic Census shows that the number of people aged 65 or older increased by 57.4% between 2010 and 2022, rising from 14 million to over 22 million, representing 10.9% of the total population. This ageing trend is also reflected in the rise of the median age of the population, which went from 29 to 35 years old during the same period (IBGE, 2022). This scenario imposes challenges for individuals' healthcare, and requires diverse investigative investments, integrating professionals from different areas.

The PAHO (2023) highlights the need to understand individuals' resources for adequately coping with a longevity that humanity has arduously achieved. From this perspective, the contribution of internal psychic examination, directed at personality and its dynamics, emerges as a relevant and promising point, especially in countries with large social inequalities, which impose adverse conditions on the health of the elderly.

From this standpoint, the present paper portrays empirical studies conducted in the Brazilian context, involving psychological assessment processes of the elderly using projective methods, particularly dedicated to the psychodynamic components of personality. We intend to illustrate the richness of the information obtained through these techniques, as well as to encourage the training of human resources in this area, providing both theoretical and practical foundations for professional actions. Such initiative has an emerging importance in our country, given the increasing longevity of its population (IBGE, 2022).

We outlined an empirical account of the contributions from the Working Groups (GTs) under

the ANPEPP (*Associação Nacional de Pesquisa e Pós-graduação em Psicologia*), focused on psychological assessment. Oliveira and Faiad (2021) observed that GTs in this area have been created since 1998, culminating in six of them by 2021. From this concentrated effort by researchers, it was possible to establish the GT "Projective methods in the contexts of psychological assessment," (Projective Methods GT) in 2008 (Pinheiro & Albuquerque, 2008). This GT's central objective is to promote the technical-scientific investigation of issues related to projective methods within the contexts of psychological assessment, in an integrated and collaborative manner, and to develop studies and discussions on projective methods based on solid theoretical foundations and empirical evidence.

In light of its responsibility to the scientific community, the present article presents the empirical studies focused on elderly individuals, conducted by the Projective Methods GT. Andrade (2021) and Casarin, Porto, Gabatz, Bonow, Ribeiro and Mota (2020) state that review studies such as the one herein presented is a valid resource for aggregating a sometimes-sparse scientific knowledge, so that researchers may understand challenges in such context. A careful explanation of these studies will help track and identify gaps or opportunities for future research and development in the field.

## Method

This is a review of the scientific literature aimed at identifying empirical studies carried out in Brazil with individuals aged 60 years or older, involving projective methods of psychological assessment. To identify such studies, we employed a direct consultation with researchers from the Projective Methods GT in September 2024, asking them to highlight their main contributions to the national research on the elderly population. This focus aims to illustrate the work of this GT, recognizing that other relevant studies exist in the Brazilian context. We considered articles published from 2008 (when the GT was established) until October 2024. Literature re-

views were not included.

The extracted information included bibliometric data such as: a) authors, GT members (location, year of publication, journals); b) study objectives; c) method (participants, region, instruments used); d) main findings. The findings are systematized and discussed regarding their contributions to necessary care for elderly individuals in Brazil, highlighting the relevance of psychodynamic variables underlying the aging process, and for promoting strategies for their full development.

## Results

Table 1 shows the bibliometric data we found using the method described earlier. Of the 29 members of the Projective Methods GT, only four reported publications that addressed the objectives of this study. As shown in Table 1, there were a total of eight publications from two regions of the country: four from the Southeast region and four from the South region.

**Table 1.** - Description of published articles in Brazil using projective methods in the psychological assessment of elderly adults

Authors (year)	Objectives	Journal	Participants (Region)	Instruments	Results
Salles and Tardivo (2022)	To present the results of a comparative and correlational investigation using the SAT	Avaliação Psicológica	30 elderly adults aged 80 or older, both sexes, divided into two groups: 18 elderly adults living in the community and 12 residents of a Long-Term Care Institution (LTCI; Southeast Region)	SQ, SAT, GDS-15, MMSE	Institutionalized elderly adults showed more positive perceptions of aging. Correlations indicated that higher GDS-15 scores were moderately associated with problem-solving absence in SAT stories. Lower MMSE scores were related to a greater number of distortions or superficiality in stimulus perceptions in the SAT, as well as more narratives deviating from typical themes evoked by the cards.
Mulle and Pasion (2021)	To compare affective experiences of institutionalized and non-institutionalized elderly adults using the PCPT, compared to available normative data for the age group	Avaliação Psicológica	50 elderly adults (G1=25 institutionalized; G2=25 non-institutionalized), mean age 73.6 ( $\pm$ 8.3 years), both genders, elementary education, and low to middle socioeconomic status, volunteers from the medium-sized city in São Paulo state (Southeast Region)	SQ, MMSE, PCPT	PCPT color choices and chromatic syndromes from G1 and G2 did not differ statistically (Student's t-test). However, compared to the norms, G1 showed statistically significant differences in several variables (blue, violet, yellow, brown, gray, Stimulus, and Colorless Syndromes), indicating particularities in affective experiences of institutionalized elderly adults.

Authors (year)	Objectives	Journal	Participants (Region)	Instruments	Results
Lampert and Scorte-gagna (2019)	To evaluate self-perception in the RCS of elderly adults with depression from an idiographic perspective	PSICO	31 protocols from elderly adults aged 60 to 86 (29 women and two men). Qualitative analysis focused on morbid content responses (MOR), Vista Shading (SumV), Poor Quality Human Representation (PHR), with distorted formal quality (FQ-) Special Codes (Sum6), and Critical Special Codes (WSum6) (Southern Region)	RCS	Responses with MOR suggested a negative and devalued self-image; SumV responses indicated self-criticism and self-loathing; PHR responses with FQ- suggested distorted and inadequate self-perception; PHR responses with Sum6 and WSum6 indicated cognitive and self-perceptual alterations. RSC findings allowed the analysis of typical configurations of elderly adults with depression and provide insights for psychotherapeutic follow-up.
Teixeira et al. (2019)	To investigate the subjective Well-Being of LTCL and non-LTCL individuals using the PCPT	Avaliação Psicológica	70 elderly adults aged 80 or older (35 in LTCLs and 35 not in LTCLs; 15 men and 55 women (Southern Region)	PCPT, GDS-15, PANAS, RSS	No significant differences were found between the groups, but elderly individuals in LTCLs showed worse cognitive and affective conditions compared to non-institutionalized elderly adults.
Grazziotin and Scorte-gagna (2018)	To demonstrate the convergent validity of the ZCS with the IHSI	Paidéia	78 elderly adults aged 60 to 96; 39 men and 39 women (Southern Region)	MMSE, ZCS, IHSI	There was a significant association of interpersonal relationship variables, content, and the cognitive triad of the ZCS with IHSI's overall and its four factors' scores.
Amaro, Areco and Nascimento (2017)	To identify major personality aspects in a sample of elderly adults	Revista Kairós-Gerontologia	50 elderly adults, 36 men and 14 women, aged 60 to 85 (M=74), 23 married, 17 widowed, 30 retired and 34 active, mostly with higher education (Southeast Region)	SQ, MMSE, R-PAS	Compared to the international normative sample of adults, the elderly sample showed a more simplistic and distorted view of reality (FQ-), though without thought confusion (WSum-Cog), as well as cognitive difficulty and a greater need for stimulation in response to environmental demands. Self-perception and other representations were similar to the normative adult population.
Rien et al. (2017)	To demonstrate criterion and discriminant validity of the ZCS in the assessment of elderly patients with Parkinson's disease	Estudos de Psicologia	61 elderly adults (mean age of 71 years), 30 with Parkinson's and 31 controls; average schooling of seven years; 31 women and 30 men (Southern Region)	MMSE, ZCS	Elderly patients with Parkinson's disease showed increased Human Detail ( $p=0.02$ , $d=0.50$ ), Morbid Content ( $p=0.025$ , $d=0.62$ ), Sum of Vista Shading ( $p=0.016$ , $d=0.72$ ), Food ( $p=0.021$ , $d=0.61$ ), and Decrease in Para-Human Detail ( $p=0.012$ , $d=-0.65$ ) and Personalized Responses ( $p=0.003$ , $d=-0.48$ ). There was a positive association between ZCS variables and age, income, and disease severity, and a negative association with time since diagnosis.

Authors (year)	Objectives	Journal	Participants (Region)	Instruments	Results
Gregoleti and Scorte-gagna (2017)	To investigate the utility of the Zulliger in assessing CKD, focusing on cognitive and interpersonal relationship constructs, and its relationship with external variables	Paidéia	60 elderly adults, 30 on hemodialysis and 30 controls (Southern Region)	MMSE, SQ, ZCS	The CKD group showed decreases in Xu% ( $p=0.031$ , $d=0.58$ ), R ( $p=0.002$ , $d=0.78$ ), Fd ( $p=0.021$ , $d=0.65$ ), and isolation ( $p=0.006$ , $d=0.61$ ), and an increase in X-% and PHR>GHR (non-significant, statistically). There was a positive association between the duration of diagnosis and family support ( $\rho=0.403$ , $p=0.027$ ).
Cardoso, Oliveira-Cardoso and Pasian (2015)	To identify the emotional needs and self-perception of institutionalized and non-institutionalized elderly persons	Subjetividade y Procesos Cognitivos	30 W aged over 60, 15 institutionalized (Group 1=G1) and 15 residing in their own homes (Group 2=G2), all from the medium-sized city in São Paulo state (Southeast Region)	Semi-structured interview and PAAM	The main affective needs identified among elderly women were a desire to receive affection, interact with others, and achieve personal and professional fulfillment. Empirical evidence indicated PAAM's sensitivity in identifying aging-related processes, proving to be a promising and useful tool in the psychological assessment of elderly individuals, deserving further investigation in other contexts.
Bastos-Formighieri and Pasian (2012)	To develop normative scores for the PCPT	Avaliação Psicológica	100 elderly adults with a mean age of 67,5 years (38 men and 62 women). Average schooling of four years. (Southeast Region)	PCPT, semi-structured interview	The most commonly used colors were green, red, and blue. There was a lower frequency of brown, white, black, and gray.

Note: M = men; W = women; GDS-15 = Geriatric Depression Scale; CKD = Chronic Kidney Disease; RSS = Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale; IHSI = Social Skills Inventory for the Elderly (Inventário de Habilidades Sociais para Idosos); LTCI = Long-Term Care Institution; MMSE = Mini-Mental State Examination; PAAM = Projective Assessment of Aging Method; PANAS = Positive and Negative Affect Scales; SQ = Sociodemographic Questionnaire; RCS = Rorschach Comprehensive System; R-PAS = Rorschach Performance Assessment System; SAT = Senior Apperception Test; PCPT = Pfister's Colored Pyramid Test; ZCS = Zulliger Comprehensive System.

## Discussion

This article aimed to present the empirical studies conducted by the Projective Methods GT, focused on the elderly population. Among the articles we found, only two Brazilian regions were represented, which are, the Southeast (Amaro et al., 2017; Bastos-Formighieri & Pasian, 2012; Cardoso et al., 2015; Mulle & Pasian, 2021; Salles & Tardivo, 2022), and the South region (Lampert & Scortegagna, 2019; Grazziotin & Scortegagna, 2018; Gregoleti & Scortegagna, 2017; Rien et al., 2017; Teixeira et al., 2019). These regions have

long-lasting universities and research centers focusing on psychological assessment in Brazil.

The Southeast region is home to several higher education institutions, such as the University of São Paulo (USP), which offer well-established, postgraduate degree programs in Psychology (master's and doctoral levels), both in the city of São Paulo and in Ribeirão Preto. Since 1980, USP and other institutions located in major centers across the country have started developing research lines and initiatives in Psychological Assessment to address

challenges in professional practice, as well as to enhance the important role of psychological assessment disciplines in Psychology education (Castro et al., 2018; Pasian et al., 2022; Pasquali, 2020; Wechsler et al., 2019). The researchers at USP, who are members of the Projective Methods GT, primarily focus on the study of clinical psychology, health, and psychological assessment using projective methods, contributing to the training of educators and researchers in this approach and to the dissemination and continuity of the use of these methods.

The consolidation of *Stricto Sensu* postgraduate programs in the interior of the state of Rio Grande do Sul (from where the other five selected studies originate), is more recent compared to the Southeast region. In the South region, the studies result from investigations by researchers who are part of a master's and doctoral program with a concentration in Human Aging, Health, and Society at the University of Passo Fundo (UPF), established in 2004. This is a pioneer program in Brazil, focusing on the study of aging from an interdisciplinary perspective, promoting research utilizing projective methods and academic training that contribute to the development of public policies and care practices aimed at the elderly population.

These factors seem to have contributed to the concentration of research on projective methods with the elderly in these regions, as well as in publications that involve groups from these educational institutions. This is a challenge that highlights the need to expand research to other regions of the country, especially those associated with researchers linked to the Projective Methods GT, according to the focus of the current work.

Such results offer potential pathways for future research on population aging, aligned with the GT's goals. They highlight the need to address at least three challenges, the first of which relates to establish partnerships and expand research on this issue to the various existing sociocultural realities in Brazil, broadly fulfilling the commitment to comply with Resolution No. 31/2022 of

the Federal Council of Psychology (*Conselho Federal de Psicologia* – CFP, 2022). This objective also involves the challenge of overcoming educational inequalities and asymmetries in professional training and investment in research in different locations in Brazil (Peixoto et al., 2024). The second challenge focuses on the elaboration and development of extensive research studies within inter-institutional networks by developing multicentric projects that involve different regions of Brazil. Finally, there is a third challenge aimed at promoting partnerships with foreign researchers, considering international investigations as a possibility to strengthen research using projective methods developed in our country, given that the literature is more extensive regarding the elderly population in more developed countries (which have a higher proportion of elderly individuals).

There was a predominance of research aimed at demonstrating the psychometric properties of projective methods, specifically for the Zulliger Comprehensive System – ZCS (Grazziotin & Scortegagna, 2018; Gregoleti & Scortegagna, 2017; Rien et al., 2017) and the Senior Apperception Test – SAT (Salles & Tardivo, 2022). One study sought normative patterns for the Pfister Color Pyramid Test (CPCT), using a sample from São Paulo (Bastos-Formighieri & Pasian, 2012).

Research investigating the psychometric properties of instruments can help determine the extent to which projective methods detect common psychological or emotional issues in old age (such as anxiety or coping problems in daily life), and whether they are specific enough to differentiate these issues from other factors. Elderly individuals, especially those living with chronic conditions or cognitive decline, may respond uniquely to projective methods. From this perspective, scientific investigations based on multimethod approaches can help understand how factors such as dementia, chronic illnesses, and other health challenges may affect emotional and social processes in aging (Pocnet et al., 2020; Stanzani Maserati et al., 2022).

Moreover, for projective methods to be effec-

tive in assessing elderly adults, it is necessary to establish norms for this population. Such data is necessary for comparing the performance of elderly individuals with persons with similar characteristics (especially, age and sociodemographic indicators), ensuring a sufficiently grounded, contextualized and precise interpretation of the results. In this direction, Weiner, Appel, and Tibon-Czopp (2019) proposed adjustments to the parameters of normality and psychopathology, considering changes in the psychological functioning of elderly adults. Their work emphasizes the importance of understanding the particularities of aging to adequately interpret Rorschach results in older adults.

Both research investigating the psychometric properties of instruments and normative studies are essential to support the scientific validity of projective methods. They are crucial for adapting and validating these instruments to accurately reflect the psychological characteristics and needs of the elderly population, thereby providing a more sensitive and appropriate assessment. In this sense, Bicalho and Vieira (2018) highlight the commitment of scientific production and professional practice in psychological assessment to align with human rights, respecting the contingent, historical, and multidetermined nature of the concepts of health and normality, especially in Brazil.

Another study assessed personality aspects of elderly individuals residing in São Paulo using the R-PAS (Amaro et al., 2017). An analysis of the international literature indicated that the assessment of personality in elderly populations and clinical attention to both personality tests and the psychopathological processes of this population are neglected areas and emphasized the dual potential of drawing techniques for assessing personality and neuropsychological status (Piotrowski, 2019). Consistent with these findings, literature reviews in Brazil show that projective methods have been underutilized in the assessment of elderly individuals (Scortegagna & Lima, 2022) and even neglected (Scortegagna et al., 2024).

It is important to note that studies using projective methods value human subjectivity, thus recognizing that each individual has a unique history and a personal way of interpreting the world. This is especially significant for elderly adults, in which issues of identity and meaning of life tend to become more pronounced. Therefore, developing research that addresses personality aspects contributes not only to a deeper understanding of the psychological needs of elderly adults, but also to the development of more effective and humanized clinical practices.

Hence, considering the results presented, we suggest that the investigations in the area of projective methods with the elderly be expanded to: a) psychometric properties and/or studies seeking normative data that include samples of elderly individuals from various regions of Brazil, in order to ensure better geographical and sociodemographic coverage, including participants from different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. This will help understand how results may vary according to contexts; b) personality characteristics of elderly individuals in different contexts and assessment demands, promoting inclusive practices using projective methods, for enhancing these instrument's professional acknowledgment and applicability in the scientific field; c) studies using projective methods along with neuropsychological measures of elderly individuals' functioning, and d) providing ongoing training for psychologists and researchers to correctly use and code projective methods, ensuring an appropriate and ethically grounded analysis.

Regarding the participant groups accessed by the research herein discussed, we noted that most investigations focused on elderly individuals residing in Long-Term Care Institutions (ILPIs; Cardoso et al., 2015; Mülle & Pasian, 2021; Salles & Tardivo, 2022; Teixeira et al., 2019) and included elderly individuals with Non-Communicable Chronic Diseases (NCCDs) (Lampert & Scortegagna, 2019; Gregoleti & Scortegagna, 2017; Rien et al., 2017). Concerning the context of ILPIs, the increase in life expectancy and changes in family arrangements, such as the reduction

in the number of family caregivers, contribute to the expansion of these institutions, which requires a deeper understanding of aging and the living conditions of those residing in these homes (Lacerda et al., 2021).

Elderly individuals living in ILPIs often report a range of limitations and face multiple vulnerabilities, including physical and mental health issues, lack or absence of family support, and increasing levels of care dependence. Along with other macrosocial and economic factors, such scenario led to the growth of ILPIs in Brazil (Lacerda et al., 2021). In this context, the research herein revised sought to evaluate the emotional experiences and subjective well-being of elderly individuals, variables that may contribute to promoting active and healthy aging in this context and contribute to the development of better mental and general health care strategies for institutionalized elderly adults.

Concerning the use of projective methods with patients suffering from Non-Communicable Chronic Diseases (NCCDs), studies assessing elderly adults remain scarce, and existing studies have sought to compare clinical groups with non-patients. In Brazil, NCCDs represent the primary burden of disease and deaths in the population, constituting a significant public health issue (Boccolini, 2016). Chronic diseases often lead to significant changes in an individual's life, with negative impacts on self-esteem, body image, and social relationships (Rien et al., 2017). Projective methods can help reveal how these patients perceive and interpret these changes and how these alterations affect their identity and interaction with the world (Gregoleti & Scortegagna, 2017; Lampert & Scortegagna, 2019; Rien et al., 2017).

Also, projective methods help professionals understand elderly adults' experience of continuous pain or discomfort, which is common in chronic diseases, can be subjective and difficult to measure. By bringing aspects of this experience to light, such techniques facilitate delivering psychological treatment aimed at alleviating emotional suffering. In this sense, prevalence

estimates show that half of the elderly population with various types of dementia experiences pain (Gagliese et al., 2018). Therefore, internationally, there has been an emerging academic interest in integrating pain assessment into the overall evaluation of elderly patients (Piotrowski, 2014) and in neuropsychological evaluation and the assessment of depressive states in elderly individuals (Grusecki, 2019).

Considering these findings, there is a need to enhance current investigations with Projective Methods focusing on NCCDs and pain assessment in dementia states. Beyond studies using inkblot instruments, investigations could utilize other expressive, projective, or performance-based techniques that assist in accessing emotions, thoughts, and internal conflicts, which are often not easily verbalized by patients. To fill this gap and promote the development of new studies, we recommend establishing partnerships with other psychological assessment working groups within ANPEPP and in international research networks.

Most of the published articles (n=9) concentrated on national journals, especially *Avaliação Psicológica* (Bastos-Formigheri & Pasian, 2012; Mulle & Pasian, 2021; Salles & Tardivo, 2022; Teixeira et al., 2019), and *Paidéia* (Grazziotin & Scortegagna, 2018; Gregoleti & Scortegagna, 2017), with only one study published in an international journal (Cardoso et al., 2015). However, on the Qualis portal of the Brazilian government's Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (*Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior* – CAPES), these journals are classified as A2 and A1, respectively, representing the highest standards of quality (access in October 2024, at <https://qualis.capes.gov.br/>).

Journals with a higher Qualis ranking are recognized for their rigorous editorial evaluation and the high quality of published articles, offering greater national and international reach, which increases the likelihood that research findings will influence the field of study and practice. These findings reflect the commitment of researchers from the Projective Methods GT to contribute to scientific advancement and promote the

well-being of the elderly population, while also seeking ways to gain recognition from specialists in the field, which can lead to new collaborations and research networks. However, it is important to note that most national journals originate from the Southeast region, with only one publication featured in an international journal. Hence, it will be necessary to disseminate research in both national and international spheres, which could stimulate discussions regarding the adequacy of projective methods and their effectiveness within this population and contribute to the continuous improvement of these instruments for elderly individuals.

In this perspective, promoting dissemination in both Brazilian and foreign journals could aid in building a more robust body of knowledge on the use of projective methods with the elderly population, increase the visibility of the topic, and foster interdisciplinary and intercultural exchanges. Publishing in international journals will allow for comparisons of approaches and methodologies used in different cultural contexts, which could enrich local and international practices, provide new insights and contextual adaptations, benefit scientific advancement, and direct actions toward the well-being of the elderly population.

By focusing on studies conducted by ANPEPP's Projective Methods GT, this study has limitations in terms of its coverage of scientific literature on elderly individuals. The scientific productions of researchers from Brazil affiliated with a single ANPEPP Working Group were analyzed, which, although specific to the theme of projective techniques in psychological assessment, represent recognized research centers in national psychology. The challenges outlined in this work aim to encourage psychology professionals in Brazil to explore the richness of projective instruments for their practice with elderly individuals, grounding it from a technical and scientific perspective considering the increasing demands for new knowledge that can help deal with the significant growth of the elderly population.

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